

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE
INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT (IEA) REPORT

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) heard a report from Dr. Brain Wells on the developing Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). The draft product for the Pacific Fishery Management Council looks at the ecosystem from the perspective of managed fish populations. This includes the effects of climate, ecological interactions and non-fisheries impacts. The continued development of the IEA will be an important and valuable tool for the developing Fishery Ecosystem Plan. There appears to be much potential for the use of this type of analysis to inform ecosystem-based fishery management decisions. That said, there needs to be more of a nexus between this work and the purpose and need of the developing Fishery Ecosystem Plan. For example, we recommend that the IEA analyses be part of the annual ecosystem reports.

In the further development of the IEA and its application to fisheries management, the following would be helpful:

1. Identify how ecosystem information could be helpful in reducing uncertainty in ways that could both enhance or restrict fishing opportunities.
2. Utilize the planned IEA treatment of Pacific sardine as an opportunity to analyze the ecosystem services of forage species including their ecological role in the food chain as well as their potential benefits to humans.
3. Consider the effects of fishery management on the California Current ecosystem, species and habitats.
4. Incorporate IEA information as a component of Management Strategy Evaluations to assess the full ecological and economic tradeoffs of different fishery management approaches.